

# Exhibit 55



## Permanent Observer Mission of The State of Palestine to the United Nations New York

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24 JUNE 2020 BY PALESTINE AT THE UN

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Members of the Council,

We often use the image of a crossroad to explain how significant a moment in history is. It means your next decisions and actions will determine the course of history and the fate of nations. There is no doubt this is such a moment

For now, the driver is Israel and it will not stop at the crossroad to assess the implications of its choices because it is drunk on power, propelled by infinite impunity, motivated by one single thought that it has been under the influence of for decades: grabbing maximum Palestinian land with minimum Palestinians.

Israel is under the illusion that this is the destination and, once it reaches it, it will be able to enjoy the view. It ignores that the road cannot end there and continues downhill towards an escalation of the conflict due to an oppressive regime combining colonialism and Apartheid. It does not care that humanity has been down this road before, and that former colonial powers and liberation movements alike have all reached the same conclusion: such a regime cannot prevail and will only lead to more injustice, instability and insecurity.

As many times before, Israel seems determined to ignore that big red STOP sign the international community erected to save lives. Israel thinks, as has been its experience so far, that it will not be fined or arrested. It believes that Security Council resolutions are binding for others; international courts have jurisdiction over others; sanctions are for others. Israel judges, but cannot be judged. The only true bias towards Israel is the one shielding it from accountability and emboldening it by considering its illegal actions as so-called "realities" that need to be endorsed rather than reversed.

Israel is testing the resolve of the international community, thinking its colonial appetite will prevail over the collective international will to advance regional

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Israel is testing the resolve of the international community, thinking its colonial appetite will prevail over the collective international will to advance regional peace and security and to preserve the rules-based multilateral order. We must prove it wrong.

The international community remains committed to the rule of international law and to the international consensus on a just solution for the Palestine question. It opposes annexation in no uncertain terms, as reaffirmed in recent weeks by statements made from capitals from every corner of the globe. The global position also remains unwavering on the illegality of Israel's policies, including settlements. This wide international front, reflected in the gathering in the Jordan Valley just two days ago with broad Palestinian and international mobilization, in the UNRWA Ministerial meeting held yesterday, and in this High-Level Security Council meeting, is strong and remains our best hope.

Mr. President, Members of the Council,

Israel needs to know that annexation will have immediate and tangible repercussions. That is why we have called on the international community to adopt effective measures, including sanctions, to deter annexation and all other unlawful policies that have prepared the ground for it. It must also be made clear that annexation will irreversibly impact Israel's relations with Palestine and the region. The Oslo accords were supposed to transform us into peace partners, but regrettably Israel continued waging a war against Palestinian lives and rights. It has violated the spirit and letter of the agreements, and with annexation, is taking a decision that will defeat their very purpose. These accords were supposed to pave the way for an end of occupation and a final peace agreement. They cannot survive annexation.

As we celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Charter, let us honour the UN purposes and principles: respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction, the suppression of acts of aggression and the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Annexation, whether partial or total, gradual or immediate, is the ultimate breach of the UN Charter and cannot go unchallenged.

From a legal perspective, annexation is not only unlawful, it is a crime under the Rome Statute. From a political perspective, it will ruin the chances for Israeli-Palestinian and regional peace. From a security perspective, it is utter nonsense as it replaces internationally-recognized borders that can be defended with a system of military control and subjugation that only fuels conflict and violence. It is, as stated in the Secretary General's report, calamitous for Palestinians, Israelis and the region. The only explanation for it is an extremist ideology rooted in denial of the Palestinian right to this land, disregard for international law and negation of history.

It is this ideology that has undermined negotiations time and time again, with Israel using negotiations as cover for its continued colonization. This ideology fostered a narrative that Palestinians should be grateful that Israel was ready to give them back any part of their own land, fragmented and besieged enclaves, Bantustans, that Palestinians may even be allowed to call a "State". Genuine negotiations must aim at ending occupation to achieve peace, not at perpetuating occupation and calling it peace.

We remain committed to peace. We have presented our position in writing on

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We remain committed to peace. We have presented our position in writing on all final status issues to the Quartet. Did the Quartet receive anything from Israel yet? We have never retracted any proposal we have made to find a compromise, unlike Israel which says we must renegotiate all over again with each new government. We have accepted the longstanding terms of reference and international law as the basis for negotiations, while Israel has rejected and violated them. We accepted the pre-1967 borders, agreeing to an historic compromise encompassing only 22% of Mandate Palestine, and yet Israel has spared no effort to undermine these borders. The entire world recognizes the significance of the Arab Peace Initiative and the promise it holds for our region. Where is the Israeli peace initiative? Even with the US plan, Israel said it is ready to take immediately whatever parts of our land the plan unlawfully grants it, while expressing readiness to negotiate the rest indefinitely.

That is why we call for an international peace conference and a multilateral mechanism that will help advance peace by holding the parties accountable, ensuring negotiations are neither a smoke screen nor a time-wasting exercise while Israel finalizes its colonial plans, but rather that negotiations are the path to just and lasting peace.

While Israel spares no effort to erase the pre-1967 borders, the Green Line, the world must consolidate them, including by recognizing the State of Palestine and by making any unilateral encroachment over the Green Line a red line. Every State has the power to help us change course before it is too late; the power to help end the Israeli occupation and salvage the two-State solution; the power to save lives; the power to preserve our global order. In fact, they have a legal and moral obligation to use this power through non-recognition and non-assistance to illegal actions, distinction, and accountability. Upholding their obligations is the only path to ensure Israel abides by its own.

At the end, allow me Mr. President to thank you for convening this important meeting. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary General for his report and relentless efforts and those of his envoy to advance peace. If Security Council resolutions, including 2334, were implemented, peace would be a reality tomorrow.

Allow me also to seize this opportunity to thank the Secretary General of the Arab League and the Ministers for their participation today, as a clear signal of the urgency and gravity of the matter. I also wish to thank your country and Council members, past, present and incoming, for their consistent, principled stances, including against annexation. Allow me finally to thank the countries and the groups, including the Arab group, which has been fully mobilized in the lead up to this meeting, the OIC, NAM, the EU, that continue working to advance freedom, justice and peace, conscious of how this could transform our region and the world.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General in his report highlighted the urgency of reversing this dangerous trajectory we are on. We are at a crossroad and to reverse course, before it is too late, the international community must take hold of the steering wheel.

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Thank you, Mr. President.



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